

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 22805 01 OF 02 240538Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 NEA-07 ISO-00 SS-07 NSCE-00 AID-01
SSM-01 SSO-00 /024 W
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O 240457Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3433
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
XXXXXX/ADD ADDEE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 22805

CODEL HOLTZMAN

EO 11652; NA
TAGS: OREP (HOLTZMAN, ELIZABETH)
SUBJECT: CODEL HOLTZMAN: MEETINGS WITH PEACE DELEGATIONS

REF: CAIRO 22499

SUMMARY: REP HOLTZMAN MET SERIATIM DEC 22 WITH HEADS OF
U.S., EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI DELEGATIONS TO CAIRO CONFERENCE.
EACH MEETING LASTED APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR. COMMON TO
LEADERS OF EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI DELEGATIONS WAS DETERMINA-
TION PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS SERIOUSLY AND WITH HOPE OF
SUCCESS. BOTH REMARKED ON CORDIAL PERSONAL RELATIONS
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 22805 01 OF 02 240538Z

WHICH HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED, NOTING THAT, FOR FIRST TIME,
EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELIS ARE TALKING DIRECTLY. EACH CLEARLY
AWARE OF EACH OTHER'S CONCERNS. BOTH RECOGNIZED SINCERITY
WITH WHICH HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER MAINTAINS POSITIONS, EVEN
WHEN THEY DIFFER STRONGLY ON THESE. ATMOSPHERICS WERE
DECIDEDLY UPBEAT, BUT WITH CLEAR RECOGNITION THAT NEGOTIA-
TIONS IN CAIRO NOW OVERSHADOWED BY COMING SUMMIT IN

ISMAILIA. END SUMMARY.

1. EGYPTIAN VIEW. ABDEL MEGUID BEGAN CONVERSATION BY NOTING HIS "AWE" AT BEING INVOLVED IN "HISTORIC EFFORT" ACHIEVE COMPREHENSIVE AND LASTING PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST. AMBASSADOR SAID HE REMINDS MEMBERS OF HIS DELEGATION ABOUT THIS GOAL DURING DAILY REVIEW OF PROCEEDINGS. HE HAS INSTRUCTED EGYPTIAN SIDE AVOID MINOR DIFFERENCES, MOVING ON TO OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN WHEN AGREEMENT IMPOSSIBLE, KEEPING ULTIMATE GOAL IN SIGHT. SAID HE HAS TOLD DELEGATION MAKE EVERY EFFORT ESTABLISH GOOD RAPPORT WITH THEIR INTERLOCUTORS. IN THIS, HE MAINTAINED, CONFERENCE HAS BEEN WHOLLY SUCCESSFUL.

2. MEGUID NOTED HE ACCEPTED JOB IN ANTICIPATION EGYPTIAN PUBLIC WOULD BACK SADAT'S INITIATIVE FULLY. HE HAD ACQUAINTANCE EXCHANGES WITH HIS LIBYAN AND SYRIAN COLLEAGUES IN NEW YORK OVER THIS; BOTH HAD PREDICTED SADAT WOULD BE OVERTHROWN BY EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AND/OR ARMY IN EVENT HE ACTUALLY WENT TO JERUSALEM. OTHER ARABS, HE CONTINUED, FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THAT EGYPTIAN ARMY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM PEOPLE. MILLIONS WHO POURED INTO STREETS TO WELCOME SADAT HOME WERE REFLECTING VIEW OF ARMY AS WELL AS GENERAL PUBLIC. MEGUID POINTED OUT THIS IS NOT FIRST OCCASION ON WHICH EGYPT HAS LED ARAB WORLD IN PEACE PROCESS; EGYPT NEGOTIATED FIRST DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 22805 01 OF 02 240538Z

AND EGYPT WAS FIRST ARAB STATE TO ACCEPT GENEVA INVITATION.

3. MEGUID SAID SADAT HAS LAUNCHED PROCESS WHICH HAS ASSUMED ITS OWN MOMENTUM. PROCESS IS IRREVERSIBLE. THERE ARE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS AHEAD; TWO SIDES DIFFER ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES; BUT THESE MATTERS CAN BE OVERCOME. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED LEGITIMATE ISRAELI SECURITY CONCERNS SAYING THESE CAN BE MET THROUGH DEMILITARIZED ZONES, WITHDRAWALS (MUTUAL), EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS, UN FORCES, OR MIXTURE OF ALL THESE. SAID IMPORTANT POINT IS TO CONTINUE SEEKING GOAL OF COMPREHENSIVE PEACE. BILATERAL DEAL IS NOT EGYPT'S AIM; OTHER ARAB STATES WILL JOIN PROCESS ONCE EGYPT IS ABLE DELIVER TRULY COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE, EVEN IF IT ONLY AGREED "IN PRINCIPLE". EGYPTIANS OVERCAME PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER WITH SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM; ISRAELIS ARE DOING SAME WITH EXPOSURE TO CAIRO.

4. MEGUID SAID IT IS NOW UP TO THE ISRAELIS TO REACT POSITIVELY. MAINTAINED BEGIN'S KNESSET ADDRESS WAS "DISAPPOINTING", SAYING HIS VIEW SHARED BY MANY NEUTRAL OBSERVERS. AMBASSADOR MEGUID CONCLUDED SUNDAY'S

MEETING WILL BE OF PRIME IMPORTANCE IN DETERMINING
DIRECTION PEACE PROCESS AND REITERATED SADAT'S COMMENT
TO REP HOLTZMAN THAT AGREEMENT BY HEADS OF STATE ON STATE-
MENT OF PRINCIPLES SOMETHING EGYPTIAN SIDE CONSIDERS VERY
IMPORTANT. STATEMENT SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING IN IT FOR
PALESTINIANS; "THEY TOO HAVE RIGHTS WHICH GO BEYOND BEING
REFUGEES; THEY HAVE HUMAN RIGHTS."

5. ISRAEL. ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE BEN-ELISSAR, TOO,
EXPRESSED STRONG SENSE OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF CAIRO
PROCESS. NOTING THAT NO ONE WOULD ACCUSE HIM OF BEING
"DOVE", HE DESCRIBED RECEPTION ACCORDED ISRAELIS AS
ALMOST OVERWHELMING. IT HAS CAUSED HIM TO RETHINK MANY
OF HIS PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC OPINION. IT
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PAGE 04 CAIRO 22805 01 OF 02 240538Z

CLEAR THAT EGYPTIANS BACK SADAT'S INITIATIVE AND THAT
PEACE IS GOAL DESIRED BY GENERAL PUBLIC.

6. HE NOTED THAT ATMOSPHERE IS IMPORTANT TO PM BEGIN.

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 22805 02 OF 02 240544Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 22805

CODEL HOLTZMAN

BEGIN TELEPHONED HIM THE PREVIOUS EVENING TO ASK WHETHER IT TRUE THAT BANNER ERECTED IN ISMAILIA PROCLAIMING "BEGIN: THE HERO OF PEACE". BEN-ELISSAR REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW, SINCE HE HAD NOT BEEN TO ISMAILIA, BUT HE DID REPORT THAT SADAT'S TOWNSMEN IN MIT ABUL KOM HAD INDEED CHANTED "BEGIN-SADAT" REPEATEDLY DURING HIS VISIT. SAID HE TOLD BEGIN DELEGATION CONVINCED EGYPTIAN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PEACE IS GENUINE.

7. BEN-ELISSAR SAID THIS AT LEAST PARTIALLY RESPONSE TO ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION ACCORDED SADAT IN JERUSALEM. HE POINTED OUT THAT, IN ISRAEL, AUTHORITIES CANNOT TURN OUT CROWDS ON COMMAND. THEY COME ONLY IF THEY WANT TO BE THERE. ISRAELI WELCOME FOR EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT FAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 22805 02 OF 02 240544Z

EXCEEDED BEN-ELISSAR'S EXPECTATIONS AND HE HAD BEEN INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN PLANNING VISIT.

8. DESPITE ABOVE ATMOSPHERICS, HOWEVER, BEN-ELISSAR POINTEDLY NOTED HIS DELEGATION NOT PREPARED FOR "PEACE AT ANY PRICE." ISRAEL WOULD NOT GIVE UP ANYTHING VITAL TO ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS. SAID IT IMPORTANT FOR EGYPTIANS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS A LINE BEYOND WHICH ISRAEL CANNOT GO. BEN-ELISSAR HOPED SADAT RECOGNIZED CONSTRAINTS ON ISRAELI ACTION, POINTING OUT THAT ONE SUCH CONSTRAINT IS THAT ISRAEL CANNOT AND WILL NOT AGREE TO CREATION OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE.

9. BEN-ELISSAR NOTED THAT ENTIRE SITUATION IS EVOLVING RAPIDLY AND, WITH IT, ATTITUDES OF ISRAELI LEADERS. SAID BEGIN HAD COME "A LONG WAY" IN HIS THINKING SINCE ELECTIONS. HE HOPED EGYPTIANS APPRECIATE THIS. BEGIN ALREADY IS UNDER ATTACK FROM HIS COALITION PARTNERS FOR STANDS HE HAS ADOPTED IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS. HE SENSED THAT PARTIES "PROBABLY" HAVE REACHED "POINT OF NO RETURN" IN PEACE PROCESS AND THAT SOMEHOW SOLUTION WILL BE FOUND.

10. IN RESPONSE TO HOLTZMAN'S OBSERVATION THAT SADAT APPEARED ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO AGREEMENT ON "STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES" AT SUNDAY'S MEETING, BEN-ELISSAR REPLIED HE DID NOT CONSIDER THIS TO BE "OUT OF THE QUESTION." ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE NOTED CAIRO CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS NOW OVERSHADOWED BY SUMMIT. "WE THREE LITTLE DELEGATES" HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE ON WHAT OUR LEADERS

WILL DECIDE.

11. IN CLOSING, BEN-ELISSAR LAUDED ROLE OF
ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON AT CAIRO CONFERENCE, SAYING
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 22805 02 OF 02 240544Z

THIS BEING PLAYED PRECISELY AS IT SHOULD BE. (OTHER
ASPECTS THIS CONVERSATION REPORTED SEPTEL FROM USDEL--
NOTAL.)

12. FOR TEL AVIV: ABOVE DRAFTED SUBSEQUENT TO CODEL'S
DEPARTURE. SHE WILL WISH TO REVIEW AND MAY WANT TO OFFER
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS. EILTS

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